



CAPTIVE GAME INFORMATION SHEET

The following is a synopsis of wildlife captivity laws relating to game species. Please refer to the regulations (NJAC 7:25-10, enclosed) for specifics. Additional information on the laws authorizing these regulations concerning the possession of game animals, as well as semi-wild and commercial shooting preserves, may be found in NJSA Title 23:3-28 to 39. Please consult your county library for copies of Title 23.

PERMIT CATEGORIES

Please note NJAC 7:25-10.7 for descriptions of the various permit categories. Indicate the most appropriate permit category on your application based upon the primary purpose for possessing the game species. If you have different species for different purposes, you may require more than one permit. For example, if you wish to own a few pair of pheasants for hobby purposes but will sell the occasional offspring, a hobby permit will suffice. However, if you wish to rehabilitate wildlife (rehabilitation category) and maintain other individual wildlife for hobby or scientific/education purposes, more than one permit is necessary. Applicants must be able to meet the necessary criteria for each category in which they apply for. If you have questions, please call us at 609-292-2966.

LEGALLY ACQUIRED GAME BIRDS OR ANIMALS

In all states, a legally acquired wild animal is, for the most part, a wild animal which is not from wild origin. That is, it is the offspring of animals that were legally held in captivity.

It is important to remember that the intent of regulations dealing with wildlife captivity are:

1. To protect wildlife from exploitation. For example, taking animals from the wild for pets, or to sell.
2. To protect native wildlife populations from disease or competition. For example to prevent diseased captive animals from escaping and introducing diseases to wild populations; or to prevent exotic captive wildlife from escaping and preying upon or out competing native wildlife.
3. To protect people from being injured by captive wildlife. For example, preventing wolves and other carnivores from mauling children.
4. To protect agricultural crops from damage from escaped exotic wildlife. For example, escaped wild boars destroy agricultural crops and also prey on ground nesting bird eggs.

Therefore, with the above in mind, native or exotic wildlife of wild origin are considered to be "legally acquired" only within strictly controlled guidelines. States generally restrict the possession of wild origin animals to the zoological and scientific holding categories. The educational and scientific knowledge gained justifies allowing an occasional taking of a wild origin animal. Wildlife rehabilitators (cooperators) are allowed to possess wild origin animals on a temporary basis.

MAMMALS

Captive Game mammals obtained for the purpose of wholesale, transport, research and exhibition require a NJ captive game permit and a permit from USDA-APHIS-Animal Care. The only exception being those animals held for the purpose of food and/or fiber. All NJ permit applicants are required to contact the USDA office and review their file with USDA-APHIS Animal Care. Applications and information can be obtained by contacting the USDA-APHIS, Animal Care office in Raleigh, North Carolina at (919) 716-5532. A copy of your USDA-APHIS permit must be submitted with your NJ Captive Game annual report and renewal form.

POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SPECIES

The Division does not allow possession of potentially dangerous species within the hobby category permit. Authority for this decision is found in NJAC 7:25-10.10(b) & 7:25-10.11(a4). Potentially dangerous wildlife are unsuitable and, therefore, inappropriate species for hobbyists.

The possession of potentially dangerous species (non-domestic dogs, bears, non-domestic cats and deer) will be allowed only within the scientific holding, propagation and sales, zoological animal exhibitor and fur farming categories. Wildlife rehabilitators must have special permission from the Division to rehabilitate potentially dangerous species.

The applicant must demonstrate knowledge and expertise in handling and caring for the species; be able to provide adequate caging for the species which will also protect the public; and must clearly state in writing the purpose and intent for possessing the species. Based upon the above criteria, the Division may approve the applicant's request.

Persons in the hobby category, who were issued permits several years ago and still currently hold potentially dangerous game animals, will be allowed to keep these animals. However, no additional acquisitions will be allowed. Hobbyists holding species in this category may wish to change their permit to another category or divest themselves of the "potentially dangerous" species. Applicants requesting category changes will have to meet the criteria established for the applicable permit category.

TRANSFERS, ACQUISITIONS AND SALES (also see import/export)

No sales (or permanent transfers of ownership) of potentially dangerous species are allowed within this state unless the buyer presents written approval from this Division to the seller. Division approval will be granted only after successful review of the potential buyer's application and successful inspection of facilities.

Holders of all categories of permits are reminded that they must notify the Division within 48 hours when the temporary transfer (e.g., temporary placement in another location NJAC 7:25-10.13) of any game bird or animal takes place. For example, if someone will be caring for your pet skunk in their home while you are on vacation, you must notify the Division of this temporary transfer. In the case of potentially dangerous species, prior written approval from the Division for the transfer is required.

All permit categories, except hobby, may acquire additional numbers of the potentially dangerous species listed on their permit provided expansion of facilities is not required. Prior approval for additional acquisitions is necessary if your facilities must be expanded or upgraded (see also section on importation). For example, if you have a propagation and sales permit for deer and wish to acquire

more deer, you do not need Division permission *unless* you need to increase your pen size. However, if you intend to buy wildlife from other states, you must have an importation permit for this purchase.

All category permit holders acquiring species not classified as potentially dangerous, but are not listed on their current permit, must report the acquisition within twenty days. For example, if you have a permit for a skunk and then purchase a squirrel during the year, you must report the purchase of the squirrel to the Division within twenty days.

The acquisition report form provided by the Division should be used. With the form, the buyer must provide a receipt or letter of transfer and provide documentation to demonstrate that he/she meets the requirements to adequately care for the species in question before a permanent permit will be granted. Details such as diet and caging must be included. Photos and/or diagrams of caging always speed up the approval process.

Receipts provided by holders of propagation and sales permits act as a temporary permit for species not listed in the potentially dangerous category.

Homemade receipts (or letters of transfers) can be used by other permit category holders. This documentation must indicate the name, address and permit number of the seller, the number and species of animals involved and the name and address of the purchaser. This includes any change in ownership that does not involve a monetary transaction. These transfers of ownership must be reported on the annual report.

The bottom line is that the seller should not sell animals to persons who are not likely to meet the criteria necessary to obtain a permit - unless they have a return policy.

The sale of meat, hide, feathers and/or body parts of game animals raised under the propagation and sales permit category is allowed provided that the meat and/or part is tagged and copies of a receipt or record of transfer is possessed by both the buyer and seller. Tags are available from the Division at a cost of \$0.15 per tag.

IMPORTATION OF WILDLIFE

Anyone seeking to import wildlife into New Jersey must first obtain an importation permit, which is available from the Division at no cost. Applicants must be able to prove that the animal(s) are in good health and have not been exposed to any infectious diseases which may effect wildlife, domestic animals or people. Importation without this permit is a violation of state, and in some cases, federal law.

CURRENT IMPORTATION BANS

Rabies Vector Species (RVS): Currently, there is a ban on the importation of any species of wildlife from states in which rabies is found in wild populations of that species. For example, rabies is found in wild raccoons from Pennsylvania. Therefore, no one can import raccoons from Pennsylvania, even if the raccoon is from a captive breeder. Before you purchase any mammals from out of state, contact the Division.

Deer/Elk and other members of the Cervidae family: A ban on importing deer has been placed into effect due to the growing concern over the spread of chronic wasting disease in wild and farmed herds of animals in the deer family throughout the United States. This will reduce the risk of chronic

wasting disease entering our State and help to prevent our wild deer from being exposed to this deadly disease. The ban will remain in effect until further notice.

Game Birds: Exotic Newcastle Disease has been diagnosed in game fowl and poultry in California, Nevada, Texas, Arizona and New Mexico and remains a threat to the entire poultry industry in the United States. Therefore, to prevent this disease from entering New Jersey, a ban has been placed on all birds originating from the above listed states until further notice.

Persons violating the importation laws are subject to stiff fines, suspension or loss of the captivity permit and may also incur costs associated with any necessary quarantine, civil liability for damage to others, and loss of the animal(s) imported illegally.

EXPORTATION

Anyone exporting wildlife to other states or countries is well advised to check with the wildlife agency in the applicable state or country. Generally, the laws are similar to our own in that the spread of disease and the transfer of dangerous wildlife are of concern. Specifics regarding species and diseases may vary. Each year we receive calls from other states seeking to verify transfers of wildlife alleged to be from New Jersey. When you export wildlife, make sure your receipts and bills of lading contain your New Jersey permit number and the species and number of individuals being transported. All out-of-state sales or transfers must be reported on your annual report forms.

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION

As noted earlier, legally acquired wildlife are generally not from wild origin. The exception that allows the holding of wild origin wildlife involves wildlife rehabilitation.

States recognize that their citizens wish to help injured and orphaned wild animals. In order to safeguard people and the animals, only persons who can demonstrate their ability to care for these animals to a point where they can be re-released to the "wild" are given rehabilitator permits. In New Jersey, an apprenticeship under a licensed rehabilitator is a prerequisite for obtaining a license to rehabilitate wildlife.

Animals not able to be released back into the wild are to be euthanized. Occasionally, animals that cannot be returned to the wild, because of physical or behavioral problems are placed in the permanent care of a permit holder in the scientific or zoological category, if there is an educational need for such animals. Confiscated animals are likewise placed in scientific or educational facilities when at all possible.

EMERGENCY POSSESSION OF WILDLIFE

Because your neighbors may know you have a permit for wildlife, you may be contacted when an injured or orphaned wild animal is found. We understand that you may opt to take this animal from the person and offer it emergency care. Permit holders, except wildlife rehabilitators, must notify the Division within 24 hours (NJAC 7:25-10.9) when they are offered or receive an animal from wild origin under emergency circumstances. Note that prior approval is necessary for accepting a potentially dangerous species. Species of wild origin will be directed to licensed rehabilitators. An attempt will be made to place a non-releasable wildlife in scientific or educational facilities. The Division is the final arbiter in deciding the placement of wildlife that cannot be returned to the wild.